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ABSTRACT

Project SAIL (Student Advocates Inspire Learning) is a Title IV-C Project located in Hopkins, Minnesota, designed to prevent students from dropping out of school by keeping them successfully involved in the mainstream environment. This study presents a review of other dropout prevention approaches, describes the intervention strategies involved in Project SAIL and evaluates the effectiveness of the project. The core methodology of Project SAIL is a goal-setting process that encourages individuals to set concrete, measurable goals which are realistic and attainable. In addition, the program utilizes group and individual counseling, teacher and parent involvement and referrals to appropriate community agencies. Project SAIL provides a successful mainstream model for dropout prevention, having achieved two out of three program objectives. (Author)

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PROJECT SAIL: AN EVALUATION OF A DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM*

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PROJECT SAIL: AN EVALUATION OF A DROPOUT PREVENTION PROGRAM*

Project SAIL (Student Advocates Inspire Learning) is a Title IV-C Project located in Hopkins, Minnesota, designed to prevent students from dropping out of school by keeping them successfully involved in the mainstream environment. This study will present a review of other dropout prevention approaches, describe the intervention strategies involved in Project SAIL and evaluate the effectiveness of the project in meeting its predicted objectives for the 1976-77 school year.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

For years educators have struggled with the task of preventing dropouts. Various approaches have been tried including counseling, mini schools, parent and staff programs, vocational programs and others. Yet in 1972 the Select Senate Committee on Equal Educational Opportunity published a report assessing the loss to the nation for all males who did not complete high school in the year 1969. As cited by Jones, some of the costs are:

1) a loss of $237,000,000,000 in income over the lives of these men;
2) a loss of $71,000,000,000 in forgone government revenue; and
3) a loss of $3,000,000,000 per year in welfare expenditure attributed to inadequate education.[1]

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[1]William M. Jones, "The Impact on Society of Youths Who Drop Out or Are Undereducated," Educational Leadership, 34 (March, 1977). 416.

*The authors gratefully acknowledge contributions from other SAIL Staff: Barbara Braham, Beverly Johnson and Jan Ormasa

What has been learned in the last ten years regarding this national delemma? Which dropout prevention programs work? What generalizations can be drawn about successful dropout prevention programs?

Earlier Research

In 1962, Davis studied a school which identified potential dropouts and placed them in a program which used the following strategies: individual counseling sessions, field trips, staff consultation with experts in areas of juvenile delinquency and mental health, teacher-guidance counselor meetings, and student meetings with special consultants. The study concludes that when potential dropouts are placed in this kind of program they 1) drop out less often, 2) get higher marks, and 3) are referred for discipline less frequently.[2]

In 1967, Sanders reported that Operation Go, a program of field trips and in-school recreational activities, resulted in 28% fewer students dropping out than the control group. The program failed, however, to show improvement in the areas of self concept, achievement, attendance, grades, citizenship and participation in extracurricular activities.[3]

In 1967, Project SAVS (Study and Vocational Skills) used small groups for activity-centered learning, field trips and early exposure to pre-vocational and work study experiences. The program was

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[2]Donald A. Davis, "An Experimental Study of Potential Dropouts," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 40 (May, 1962), 799-802.

[3]Charlie H. Sanders, "Operation Go -- A Special Project for Potential Dropouts From a Junior High School Situated in a Lower Socio-Economic Area of the City of Detroit," Dissertation Abstracts, 29 (July, 1968), 74-75.

effective in lowering absentee rates, lowering dropout rates, and increasing self concept scores.[4]

In 1969 the Texarkana Rapid Learning Centers utilized the first performance contracting system designed to prevent dropping out. This approach focused on individual prescribed remediation in reading and math. The program also used tangible incentives as reinforcers. Significant reductions in the target schools' drop out rates were achieved in the first two years of the project. In addition to the special math and English remediation the program was expanded to include vocational exploratory classes, special reading clinics for nonreaders and increased teacher inservice.[5]

Research of the Seventies

A vocationally oriented program, Project Stay, had a work/study component which actually paid students for holding part time jobs. Teacher-coordinators taught job-related skills to students who held jobs and attended school for half days. Counseling-learning centers provided additional support for students and mainstream teachers. Social workers made home contacts and provided parents with information as to how their children were progressing in school. Teacher aides assisted the staff by doing individual tutoring and other related duties.

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[4]David Norman Newbury, "An Evaluation of a Dropout Prevention Project in Hazel Park, Michigan," Dissertation Abstracts, 28 (February, 1968), 2907-2908.

[5]Bill Howard, "Texarkana's Rapid Learning Centers," Dropouts: Prevention and Rehabilitation; Schools Rescue Potential Failures, (Washington, D.C.: National School Public Relations Association, 1972), pp. 51-52.

Overall, the project was effective in reducing the drop out rate, as well as the suspension rate, in the target schools.[6]

Similarly, the Nogales Public School Exemplary Project combined a work-study component with a teacher-counselor program which resulted in a fifty percent retention of potential dropouts. The extent to which this was an improvement over previous years was not clearly stated in the project summary.[7]

Project Emerge, which used vocational exploration labs along with individual counseling and reading labs, experienced only partial success in meeting its project objectives. While expulsions were reduced by 71% the drop out rate was only reduced by 4% which fell short of the 10% reduction predicted.[8]

Young described a group counseling approach which utilized Kohlberg's stages of development in conjunction with an Occupational Work Adjustment Program. Students showed significant gains in spelling and math, did significantly better in school attendance, and showed slight gains in the Semantic Differential Self Rating Inventory and other tests. Also, the school suspension rate was reduced by over two-thirds.[9]

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[6]"Project Stay," Positive Approaches to Dropout Prevention: Review of Twelve Title VIII Programs, United States Office of Education, 1973 (ERIC No. ED 087-135).

[7]"Nogales Public Schools Exemplary Project Final Report," Nogales High School District #10, Arizona, 1975 (ERIC No. ED 118-795).

[8]James Crawford, "Project Emerge, Dayton, Ohio, 1973-74 Final Report," July 12, 1974 (ERIC No. ED 094-097).

[9]Peggy Young, "The Kohlberg Moral Development Rationale and a Program for Potential School Dropouts: An Interim Report," March, 1973 (ERIC No. 090-454).

Project School combined group counseling, parent counseling and positive reinforcement as a method of preventing students from dropping out. The drop out rate for students in the program equaled that of the regular school. The authors felt that "the parents and the community as a whole [should be] informed of the programs in which they can participate ...; [they should be] made to feel that they can play an important part in their child's education."[10]

Through planned group counseling sessions involving a pre-specified topic for the day, inservice training for teachers and parent contacts, Operation C.O.D. (Curtailment of Dropouts) was successful in its objectives. Bennett found an increase in the reading scores, school attendance and self esteem of the potential dropouts who participated in this program.[11]

The Edison Project[12] had as its target objectives to: reduce the drop out rate, increase daily attendance, improve reading and math skills and increase career awareness. This intervention model included a self-contained classroom with the following components: Instructional-curricular adaptations, home contacts, reading and math remediation, career development and on-the-job experience. The project successfully met its objectives.

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[10]Louis Hooban and Robert Pubsley, "Project School: A Handbook of Validated Developmental Dropout Prevention Program's Methods and Procedures," 1973 (ERIC No. ED 124-852).

[11]Edward C. Bennett, "Operation C.O.D., Curtailment of Dropouts," December 17, 1975 (ERIC No. ED 136-091).

[12]Lawrence A. Lipton, "Edison Project: Final Evaluation Report, Year 3, 1973-74," 1974 (ERIC No. ED 096-384).

An activity counseling approach was studied by Casella and Schrader which involved students in several out-of-school urban encounter field trips. Each activity session allowed for formal and informal group discussions. The authors reported that at the end of the experiment (10 weeks) the experimental group showed improvement over the control group in all three areas of evaluation (self concept, credit earning and productivity), but not at a significant level. The authors concluded that 10 weeks was too short a time span to make a significant difference.[13]

In a review of psychologically oriented programs for potential dropouts, Goodyear cited a study by Hess which compared the effectiveness of an individual counseling approach and a group counseling approach with various no treatment groups. The treatment group showed significant gains on the social adjustment score of the California Test of Personality, however, the other measures of growth (G.P.A.'s, teacher evaluation, self adjustment scores of C.T.P.) proved nonsignificant.[14]

Goodyear also cited a study by Karnes summarizing the effects of a vocationally oriented curriculum as well as providing personal counseling for both potential dropouts and their parents. The

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[13]Donald A. Casella and Don R. Schrader, "'Tripping' With Borderline Adolescents," The School Counselor, 23 (September, 1975), 48-51.

[14]Rodney K. Goodyear, "A Review of Psychologically Oriented Interventions for Potential Dropouts," The Journal of Educational Research, 67 (April, 1974), 347-350, citing T. Hess, "A Comparison of Group Counseling with Individual Counseling in the Modification of Self Adjustment and Social Adjustment of 15-Year-Old Males Identified as Potential Dropouts," unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 1969.

experimental group had significantly better attendance, better school adjustments and fewer dropouts than the control group.[15]

Recently, Smaby and Anderson compared a counseling approach of action goal setting with a regular school counseling approach. The experimental group met individually with counselors and set action goals designed to involve the students in improving their own schooling. Examples of goals chosen with high frequency were: talk to a counselor regarding my school problems, see and discuss available information regarding my career planning, see an employment counselor, adjust my schedule, and get a part time job. The authors reported that an overall completion rate of 68% of all goals contributed to a lower drop out rate for the experimental group.[16]

In Goodyear's 1974 review of dropout prevention programs he described a variety of approaches which were successful. When looking for the underlying cause of success, he concluded that it may be the "friendly attention by school personnel and the fostering of a feeling that he, the Potential Dropout, is a cared for member of the school community."[17]

Another interesting theory regarding successful programs may be the effects of multiple approaches within a given dropout prevention project. Within this review of 15 different dropout prevention

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[15]Goodyear, pp. 347-350, citing M. Karnes, "The Efficacy of a Prevocational Curriculum and Services Designed to Rehabilitate Slow Learners Who Are Dropout, Delinquency, and Unemployment Prone, Final Report, Community Unit 4 School District, Champaign, Il.,"1966 (ERIC No. ED 016-106).

[16]Marlowe Smaby and Jerry Anderson, "Educational Alternatives are Needed for Probable Dropouts," Pupil Personnel Services Journal, 4 (September, 1975), 13-18.

[17]Goodyear, pp. 349.

programs, 14 have at least two intervention strategies. The majority of the successful programs reviewed, have three or more of the following components; group counseling, individual counseling, career development, regular parent contacts, field trips, staff consultation or inservice, curricula adaptation and self-contained classrooms.

While research has not focused on the effects of multiple approach dropout prevention strategies as opposed to single approach strategies, this idea is not new to educators in the field. Martin J. Filogamo, Director of the Texarkana Project, states "no one program can do the job alone, it takes a combination." In the fourth year of that project, Filogamo added special non-reader classes, vocational exploratory classes and a teacher inservice program.[18]

Gatti and Colman described a community network model for working with troubled children which not only involved the child, but included the child's parents and family, the child's school, the child's friends and other people in the community who were significant to the child. The authors reported that "by having access to many systems, we are able both to receive and to share relevant change at all points."[19] Thus the network or systems approach may be an additional variable to consider when looking for effective dropout prevention strategies.

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[18]Howard, pp. 52

[19]Frank Gatti and Cathy Colman, "Community Network Therapy: An Approach to Aiding Families with Troubled Children," American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 46 (October, 1976), 608-617.

THE NEED FOR A NEW MODEL - HOPKINS, MINNESOTA

A number of factors contributed to the need for developing a new model to prevent students from dropping out of the Hopkins Public Schools. Although both high schools in the district were staffing mini school programs which were designed to keep students in school, the drop out rate for the district increased on an average of 19% per year over a four year period from 1970-1 to 1974-5. The actual number of dropouts in 1975 was twice the number of dropouts in 1971.

In addition, educators in the district identified a number of students as inschool dropouts who exhibited dropout-like behavior but were still in school. These students were characterized as having high absentee and failure rates as well as one or more of the following: chemical or alcohol problems, school and authority related conflicts, family disturbances, social adjustment difficulties and court related problems. It was felt that these students had not been adequately serviced by the past programs.

Lastly, it was felt that the mini school model would prove obsolete in light of the legislation requiring the least restrictive placement for all students. Prior to that time, the self contained mini school program was the only option for students exhibiting dropout characteristics.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW MODEL _ PROJECT SAIL

Project SAIL (Student Advocates Inspire Learning) utilizes Goal Attainment Scaling along with group and individual counseling sessions to help students reduce the social and emotional obstacles to learning. Other compenents of the program are bi-weekly parent contact regarding student progress in school; parent education programs; weekly contact with all mainstream teachers of each SAIL student; teacher inservice courses; individual tutoring for some students; and consultation with community agencies in which students are involved. The model incorporates a systems approach which perceives the student as being a part of many systems -- family, school, peer and community -- all of which need to be affected if the student is to make significant changes. The project served sixty-seven students in its pilot year, 1976-77, and was staffed by two social workers, four special education teachers, and a social work aide.

Goal Attainment Scaling (G.A.S.)

The core methodology of Project SAIL is Goal Attainment Scaling which is a goal setting process that encourages individuals to set concrete, measurable goals which are realistic and attainable. G.A.S. was developed by the Program Evaluation Resource Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota as an intervention and evaluation tool for mental health centers.[20]

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[20]Thomas J. Kiresuk and Robert E. Sherman, "Goal Attainment Scaling: A General Method for Evaluating Comprehensive Community Mental Health Programs," Community Mental Health Journal, 4 (December, 1968), 443-354.

Kiresuk and Garwick outline this process as follows:

a) collection of information about the person or organization for which goals will be scaled;
b) specification of the major areas most relevant to the client where change would be feasible and helpful;
c) development of specific predications for a series of outcome levels for each major area; and
d) scoring of the outcomes as they have been achieved by the time of a later follow-up interview.[21]

These four steps involve the use of a Goal Attainment Scaling Follow-up Guide which the client and staff member mutually construct. A follow-up guide may include any number of specific goals which the client and the staff member have mutually identified. Each goal has five levels of possible outcome ranging from "least favorable level of outcome" to "expected level of outcome" to "much more than expected level of outcome." (See Appendix A.) Together the client and staff member make predictions for each level of outcome. All predictions must be realistic and attainable; the expected level should be the most likely outcome. To summarize, the staff member and client set any number of goals in specific, behavioral terms and predict an expected level of change regarding each one.

While Goal Attainment Scaling has had considerable use as a program evaluation tool, its use and applicability as an effective counseling procedure has had less application. In a study measuring the effectiveness of Goal Attainment Scaling as adjunct to counseling, Smith found that clients using G.A.S. had better results than a control group as measured by the Shostrum Personal Orientation Inventory, Norwicki and Strickland's Children's Locus of Control Scale, a

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[21]T. J. Kiresuk and G. Garwick, "Basic Goal Attainment Scaling Procedures," Project Evaluation Project Report, 1969-1973, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Program Evaluation Resource Center, 1974) pp. 3.

consumer satisfaction questionnaire and behavioral measures. In addition, the author noted that G.A.S. appeared "to combine the theoretically beneficial aspects of (a) behavioral criteria, (b) mutually defined goals, (c) meaningfulness of communication, (d) clear expectations, and (e) continuous, mutual feedback."[22]

Supporting the use of goal setting, Hackney notes the effectiveness of goal setting in helping the client and the counselor see the client's progress immediately.[23] Without a specific method for measuring behavioral change, it is sometimes difficult to notice subtle growth.

Smaby and Sanborn emphasized that by using goal setting the counselor will get "better investment from the client, more sharing of responsibility, and a clearer knowledge by participants of the counselor's role in the therapeutic process."[24] Smith also noted the increased awareness of personal responsibility that clients experience through the use of goal setting.[25]

In a related study, Finch and others have found that "emotionally disturbed children who perceive a relationship between

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[22]David L. Smith, "Goal Attainment Scaling as an Adjunct to Counseling," Journal of Counseling Psychology, 23 (January, 1976), 22-27.

[23]Harold Hackney, "Goal Setting: Maximizing the Reinforcing Effects of Progress," The School Counselor, 20 (January, 1973), 176-181

[24]Marlowe H. Smaby and Marshall P. Sanborn, "Interview Involvement Procedures for Getting Action on Guidance Goals," The School Counselor, 19 (November, 1971), 203.

[25]Smith, p. 22-27.

their own behavior and the resulting consequences obtain higher achievement scores than those who do not."[26] Similarly, by increasing a client's perception of the correlation between his actions and resulting consequences, Goal Attainment Scaling may increase achievement.

Project SAIL uses Goal Attainment Scaling as a method of negotiating with students which of the student's problem areas will be focused upon. Students (with help from staff) are required to write a goal relating to each class, as well as a goal relating to homeroom attendance and at least one personal goal. In reality, most students write more than one personal goal; some construct as many as eight. Examples of the variety and scope of personal goals can be found in Appendix B. These goals are scored weekly in group or individual sessions. Since students receive elective credit for SAIL, they need to score at the expected level on 50% or more of their goals. (See Appendix C for a scored Follow-up Guide.)

Group Component

In addition to G.A.S., most students are required to be a part of a group which is composed of eight to ten students and two staff leaders and meets three times each week for an hour and fifteen minutes per session. All students are also required to attend individual counseling sessions with a staff member.

Once in group, students experience various activities designed

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[26] A.J.Finch, Jr., K.A.Pezzuti, and W.M.Nelson III, "Locus of Control and Academic Achievement in Emotionally Disturbed Children," Journal of Counseling and Clinical Psychology, 43 (February, 1975), 103.

to facilitate personal sharing and to build group cohesiveness. Occasional field trips are also included. Staff members model confrontation and supportiveness as situations demand. Later, as the students gain confidence and trust they begin supporting and confronting one another; personal issues are brought in for the group's attention.

Tutoring Component

Approximately 25% of the SAIL students are involved in individual or small group tutoring sessions. Efforts are made to identify students who need help with reading, writing, spelling, organizing, conceptualizing and other academic skills. Once identified, these students have the option of receiving special tutoring help from a member of the SAIL staff trained in learning disabilities.

Parent Component

Parents are contacted biweekly and informed of their son/daughter's progress as measured by the G.A.S. Follow-up Guide. Parents are encouraged to hold realistic, specific expectations for their son/daughter, often using goals to facilitate this process. Parents receive factual and complete information, with special attention given to positive progress and accomplishments made during the week. In addition, parents are informed immediately when students are not in school. Other aspects of the parent program for 1976-77 included parent newsletters, two pot luck dinners and ten evening sessions focusing on chemical dependency, behavior management and communication skills.

Teacher Component

Each week, SAIL staff meets with each student's teachers for reciprocal sharing of information. Student goals are shared with faculty who in turn share pertinent information regarding student progress on goals. In some cases individual contracts are negotiated between teachers and students. These contracts are designed to be realistic and to provide behaviorally specific expectations which are attainable and measurable. (See Appendix D.)

Other teacher components for 1976-77 school year included a voluntary teacher inservice program organized and coordinated by SAIL staff. Ten inservices, each approximately eight hours long and including fifteen participants, were offered to Lindbergh and district faculty. Teachers were paid for their attendance at inservice courses which met after school. Topics included: chemical dependency, goal setting, behavior management, families in crisis, working with parents, games kids play, case study approach, adolescent sexuality, curriculum modification, and life/career planning.

Community Component

The SAIL staff attempts to facilitate its students' involvement with community agencies. Efforts are made to help SAIL students and their families utilize those community resources which may be supportive such as chemical/alcoholism treatment, court services, state employment services, medical services and counseling agencies. An ongoing communication network is set up for each student involving frequent evaluation and referral follow-up.

EVALUATION

Population

Sixty-seven tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students, who have been referred by teachers and identified by a team of specialists as emotionally handicapped, were served in the first year of Project SAIL. In the context of this project, emotionally handicapped refers to social maladjustment indicated by one or more of the following: dysfunctional peer relationships, sexual adjustment problems, family psychological problems which affect school behavior, chemical dependency, and school problems (class disruption, vandalism, withdrawal, unduly aggressive behavior). Specifically, these students were either returning dropouts or students who were in school on a minimal basis and experiencing frequent failures.

Evaluation Design

The SAIL Project had the following project goals for 1976-77:

Objective I. 75% of students who have participated in SAIL two quarters or more will meet or exceed individualized, behaviorally specific goals relating to school achievement and social/emotional development as measured by a Goal Attainment Follow-up score of at least 45.0

Objective II. Students who have been in SAIL two quarters or more will function more successfully in the mainstream school experience as demonstrated by: a) 75% of these SAIL students will not drop out of school by June, 1977, and b) of those SAIL students who do not drop out, at least 50% will no longer exhibit inschool dropout behavior. (An inschool dropout is a student who earns fewer than three credits in a year.)

Objective III. Because of the SAIL Project, the school climate will be more responsive to the needs of handicapped students (emotionally handicapped/learning disabled) as measured by pre/post testing on the School Sentiment Inventory.

Objective I required the use of Goal Attainment Scaling techniques to determine whether it was achieved or not. An individual

Goal Attainment Scaling score of 45.0 or higher indicated that the client achieved satisfactory results on his goals. The numerical scores were found by weighting each level in the Goal Attainment Follow-up Guide and applying the following formula as developed by Kiresuk and Sherman:[27]

$$\text{Goal Attainment Score} = \frac{50 + 10w_iX_i}{\sqrt{(1-p)\ w_i^2 + p(\ w_i)^2}}$$

where w = scale weight
x = scale score

In a discussion of validity, Garwick argues that a "Basic construct underlying Goal Attainment Scaling is the 'attainment of expectations'" that is inherent in every use of this procedure. In addition, Garwick cites a number of studies stating that, in general, "correlations with other measures, as expected, are positive, but low to moderate...."[28]

In reporting on reliability, Garwick noted that because of the difficulty of applying other types of reliability approaches to G.A.S., most examinations focus on inter-rater agreement. In most studies, G.A.S. was found to have a "usefully high degree of inter-rater agreement, and a usefully high degree of Goal Attainment Score stability for clients when follow-up guides are made by more than one person."[29]

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[27]Kiresuk and Sherman, p. 449.

[28]G. Garwick, "A Construct Validity Overview of Goal Attainment Scaling," Program Evaluation Project Report, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Project Evaluation Resource Center, 1974), p. 2.

[29]G. Garwick, "An Introduction to Reliability and the Goal Attainment Scaling Methodology," Program Evaluation Project Report, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: Project Evaluation Resource Center, 1974), p. 1-15.

Objective II involved examination of school records to determine the number of SAIL students who actually dropped out of school by June, 1977 and the number of SAIL students who earned three or more credits per year.[30]

Objective III was measured by the use of the School Sentiment Index as an indicator of overall student attitude toward school. A control group of sixty-seven mainstream students was identified and pre/post tested in three English classrooms. This population was not randomly selected, nor were the classrooms randomly chosen. It was hypothesized that because of Project SAIL the school climate would be more responsive to the needs of all handicapped students because of the focus on mainstream teachers through inservice and individual contact. An experimental group of ninety-nine students with emotional and/or learning handicaps was established for this part of the evaluation. All SAIL students were part of this group.

In addition to the specific measurement of objectives, efforts were made to gather data from questionnaires regarding consumer satisfaction.

Evaluation Results

Objective I was achieved. Twenty-one of the twenty-eight students (75%) who were in SAIL for two quarters or more had G.A.S. scores of 45.0 or greater. Individual G.A.S. scores for the twenty-eight students were as follows:

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[30]The average number of credits earned at Lindbergh High School is approximately five credits per year for each student. In the tally of credits earned, SAIL credit was not counted towards the minimum of three credits needed for each SAIL student.

TABLE I[31]

TOTAL AVERAGE SCORES

36.23	46.04	50.49	55.81
38.60	46.50	50.60	56.21
38.85	47.11	50.68	56.74
40.87	48.17	52.30	57.91
43.38	48.62	53.66	58.77
43.93	48.72	53.68	59.23
44.15	48.88	55.63	63.85

Objective II was achieved. Out of the twenty-eight students who participated in SAIL for two or more quarters, twenty-five (89%) did not drop out of school. Of those twenty-eight SAIL students who did not drop out, eighteen (72%) no longer exhibited inschool dropout behavior as indicated by their earning three or more non-SAIL credits during the year.

An additional finding relative to this objective is that of all the SAIL students (67) who participated in the program at all, 72% (48 students) did not drop out. Of these students, 71% earned three or more non-SAIL credits.

Objective III was not achieved. From Tables 2 and 3 it is clear no statistically significant difference was present for either group:

TABLE 2

PRE/POST TEST MEAN TOTAL SCORES ON SCHOOL SENTIMENT INDEX: MAINSTREAM STUDENTS

	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	T Score
Pre	62	217.48	19.08	
Post	67	222.6	19.88	-1.49

[31]Linda Hall Harris, "Evaluation of SAIL Students' Goal Attainment Scores," (Unpublished report, June, 1977).

TABLE 3

PRE/POST TEST MEAN TOTAL SCORES ON SCHOOL SENTIMENT INDEX: HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

	N	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	T Score
Pre	99	201.14	27.17	- .52
Post	96	203.	22.52	

Consumer Satisfaction Results

Student responses in a questionnaire (N=35) indicated approximately 50% of SAIL students felt goal setting was helpful to them. Individual comments can be found by referring to Appendix E.

The high school staff were also asked to fill out a questionnaire (N=47). The following were staff responses to questions:

SAIL was designed to work with those students who were experiencing the most difficulty in school. In your opinion, has this occurred?
(29) Yes
(1) No
(17) Undecided or Don't Know

Did you feel confident that SAIL staff would follow-through in checking on SAIL students?
(31) Yes, very
(13) Somewhat
(1) No, not really
(2) Undecided

How did you feel about the communication between yourself and SAIL staff regarding SAIL students? Please check as many as are applicable.
(20) Occurred on a regular basis -- at least biweekly
(23) Gave me a chance to get information I wanted about the student
(27) Gave me a chance to give information about the student to staff
(14) Was very helpful
(3) Was too time consuming and inconvenient
(19) Made me feel supported in working with the SAIL student
(1) Was unnecessary
(19) Made working with these kids easier

All staff participating in the inservice program were asked to fill out a questionnaire asking their opinion of the inservice (N=149). The results are as follows:

1) 98 percent felt the inservice they attended was helpful to them;
2) 91 percent felt they would be able to use the information they had learned from the inservice;
3) 90 percent felt the inservice had met their expectations; and
4) 98 percent would recommend the inservice they attended to others.

The SAIL parent questionnaire yielded the following results (N=31):

In general, how do you feel about the SAIL Project?
(71%) Very helpful
(11%) Moderately helpful
(11%) So-so
(0%) Made things worse
(7%) No difference

Did your son or daughter do better in school after joining SAIL?
(73%) Yes, definitely
(15%) Somewhat better
(12%) No difference
(0%) Worse

How often did you (or your spouse, if applicable) talk with a SAIL staff person either by phone or in a conference once your son/daughter was in SAIL?
(39%) Once a week
(44%) Once every other week
(17%) Once a month
(0%) Once a semester

Did you feel satisfied with the amount and kind of communication with SAIL staff?
(97%) Yes
(3%) No

In general, did you notice any positive or favorable changes in your son/daughter after joining SAIL? In what areas did change occur?
(60%) Yes, definitely
(22%) Somewhat
(11%) No
(7%) No response

Discussion

This study evaluated the success of Project SAIL in achieving its program objectives. The results indicate achievement of two out of three objectives and positive results in a consumer satisfaction questionnaire. However, certain limitations should be pointed out.

In the evaluation design, only those students who were in SAIL for two quarters or more were used in measuring Objective I. Since this left out some thirty-nine students, it was impossible to assess these students' success in attaining their behaviorally-specific goals. Consequently, it is difficult to measure this program's effectiveness in working with students over a short (less than two quarters) period of time.

Objective II measured favorable outcomes with regard to SAIL students remaining in school, as well as measuring the reduction of inschool dropout behavior (measured by the attainment of credits). It could be argued that the latter result, i.e., the attainment of three or more non-SAIL credits, occurred because SAIL staff might have tried to convince the mainstream staff to "pass along" these students. This, however, was not the case. In informal discussions with both SAIL and mainstream staff it was found that while the SAIL staff encouraged realistic expectations for their students, they did not pressure teachers into granting undeserved, passing grades. On the contrary, it was observed the SAIL staff was often more strict and set higher expectations than the mainstream staff.

Objective III intended to reflect change in the entire school climate as a result of teacher inservice programs and individual contact with SAIL staff. It was assumed that if a significant change in the

school climate occurred, it would have been reflected on the School Sentiment Index. In retrospect, this may not have been a valid way of measuring change.

A positive school climate change which may relate to this objective was noted by the Dean of Students. Lindbergh was the only school in the secondary system of the Hopkins Public Schools which experienced a decline in vandalism for the school year 1976-77.[32]

While the consumer satisfaction questionnaire provided useful and generally positive information, they were returned by only one-half of all students, teachers and parents. Obviously, many viewpoints were left unexpressed which may have affected the overall findings.

Conclusion

During SAIL's pilot year, 1976-77, two out of three objectives were achieved. A consumer rating questionnaire indicated generally favorable results. By utilizing a systems approach and a behaviorally-specific goal setting methodology, Project SAIL provided a successful mainstream model for preventing students from dropping out.

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[32]Statement by Richard Alford, Dean of Students, Hopkins, Minnesota, May 28, 1977.

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APPENDIX A A SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP GUIDE

STUDENT NAME _____ GOAL SETTER _____ GUIDE NUMBER _____

_____ FOLLOW-UP DATE

_____ GOAL-SETTING DATE

___ Number of scales written
___ Goal Attainment Score
___ Level at Intake
___ Change Score

GOAL ATTAINMENT FOLLOW-UP GUIDE

Levels of Predicted Attainment				
Much less than expected level of outcome				
Somewhat less than expected level of outcome				
Expected level of outcome				
Somewhat more than the expected level of outcome				
Much more than the expected level of outcome				

APPENDIX B

EXAMPLES OF PERSONAL GOALS

1. Fun Activities: skiing, movies, guitar, time with pets, camping, swimming
2. Relationships: time with friends, making new friends
3. Assertiveness: stating feelings
4. Career: getting a job
5. Family: spending time at home
6. Drugs: staying straight, controlled use
7. Acting out: contacts with law
8. Responsibility: coming in on time
9. Anxiety: being in crowded places
10. Depression: getting up on time
11. Independence: getting a car

STUDENT NAME Bill GOAL SETTER L.B. GUIDE NUMBER ____

November 4
FOLLOW-UP DATE
September 2
GOAL-SETTING DATE

____ Number of scales written
____ Goal Attainment Score
____ Level at Intake
____ Change Score

GOAL ATTAINMENT FOLLOW-UP GUIDE

APPENDIX C SCORED FOLLOW-UP GUIDE

Levels of Predicted Attainment	Class Attendance	Assignments in World Studies	Staying Straight	Talking in English Class
Much less than expected level of outcome	Less than 16 classes per week 9/16 9/2	Start none 10/7 9/16 9/2	1 or less 9/16 9/28	zero 9/16 9/2 9/9
Somewhat less than expected level of outcome	16-18 of 26 classes per week 10/7 9/9	Start some, complete none 9/9	2	1 10/7 9/23
Expected level of outcome	Final Average 10/14 9/23 19-22 out of 26 classes per week 9/30	10/14 Start some, complete some Final Average 9/23	9/23 10/7 Stay straight (no drugs or alcohol) 3 out of 5 school nights* per week 9/30 Final Average	Final Average Make a comment on my own* two times per week in English class
Somewhat more than the expected level of outcome	23-24 out of 26 10/28 10/21 11/4	10/28 Start all, complete some 11/4 9/30	10/28 4 9/9 10/14	3 10/14 10/7
Much more than the expected level of outcome	More than 24	Complete all 10/21	5 10/21 11/4	10/28 10/21 4 or more 11/4

33

34

*All day and night, Sunday through Thursday

*On my own means without being asked a question

APPENDIX D

STUDENT CONTRACT

This contract assumes that Bill wants to pass English class.

1. In order to pass English, I must attend for the rest of the quarter without any unexcused absences. (For any excused absences I need a note from home. If I'm sick for two or more days I need a doctor's excuse.)

2. In order to pass English I must complete 7 out of 9 weekly assignments and score above 75% on the final test. (Assignments must be turned in on the due date or they will not be accepted.)

I agree to the above expectations.

_____
student

_____
teacher

_____
SAIL staff